

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HELSIN 02230 101511Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9251

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOMM

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FI

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT KEKKONEN ASKS SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT TO
SOUND OUT PARTIES ABOUT NEW POLITICAL GOVERNMENT

REF: HELSINKI 2178

1. PRESIDENT KEKKONEN BY LETTER OCTOBER 9 ASKED SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT VIENO SUKSELAINEN (CENTER PARTY) TO TAKE ON TASK OF SOUNDING OUT THE POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE COMPOSITION AND PROGRAM OF A NEW POLITICAL GOVERNMENT. KEKKONEN IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE ADVISED SUKSELAINEN THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT SHOULD "REFLECT AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT ELECTION." THIS IS ON THE ONE HAND A PERFECTLY NORMAL AND CUSTOMARY INJUNCTION BUT, GIVEN THE VERY MIXED RESULTS OF THE ELECTION -- WITH CHRISTIANS, CENTER, COMMUNISTS AND CONSERVATIVES THE GAINERS, AT THE SAME TIME ONE THAT NO ONE IS REALLY ABLE TO INTERPRET.

2. KEKKONEN'S REQUEST THAT SUKSELAINEN MAKE HIS SOUNDINGS NOT ONLY ABOUT THE COMPOSITION BUT ALSO CONCERNING THE PROGRAM OF A NEW GOVERNMENT IS UNUSUAL AND HAS BEEN TAKEN
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PAGE 02 HELSIN 02230 101511Z

AS A RE-AFFIRMATION THAT KEKKONEN THIS TIME INDEED INTENDS

TO TAKE HIS TIME ABOUT PERSONALLY INVOLVING HIMSELF IN THE THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

3. SUKSELAINEN IS EXPECTED TO START HIS SOUNDINGS EARLY NEXT WEEK. EVEN WITHOUT INCLUDING PROGRAM QUESTIONS THE SOUNDINGS WOULD HAVE BEEN TIME CONSUMING AND DIFFICULT, NOW THEY BECOME NEXT TO HOPELESS. IF SUKSELAINEN CAN COME UP WITH SOME GENERAL AGREEMENT BY THE MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER, HE WILL HAVE DONE EXTREMELY WELL. IN SUCH CASE KEKKONEN WILL NOMINATE SOMEONE TO ACTUALLY TRY TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, EITHER ON THE BASIS OF SUKSELAINEN'S RECOMMENDATION OR KEKKONEN'S OWN CHOICE.

4. KEKKONEN'S REQUEST TO SUKSELAINEN CAME AFTER THEY HAD FIRST HAD A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION AND AFTER THE LEADERSHIP OF ALL THE PARTIES HAD CALLED ON THE PRESIDENT ON OCTOBER 6 AND 7. DURING HIS TALKS WITH THE PARTY LEADERS KEKKONEN ASKED THEM FOR THEIR OPINIONS OF WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE FORMED, BUT DID NOT TOUCH ON PROGRAM MATTERS. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE COMMUNISTS BOTH SUGGESTED A POPULAR FRONT GOVERNMENT INCLUDING THE CENTER PARTY. THE CENTER, SWEDISH, AND LIBERAL PARTIES ARGUED FOR A GOVERNMENT ON THE WIDEST POSSIBLE PARLIAMENTARY BASIS, DID NOT RULE OUT THE PARTICIPATION OF ANY PARTY, AND DEMANDED THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP FOR THE CENTER PARTY. THE CONSERVATIVES ALSO ARGUED FOR A WIDELY BASED GOVERNMENT WITH A NON-SOCIALIST PREDOMINANCE, AND SUPPORT THE DEMAND FOR A CENTER PARTY PRIME MINISTER. AS A SECOND CHOICE THE CONSERVATIVES SUGGESTED A PURELY NON-SOCIALIST COALITION GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THEMSELVES, WHICH WOULD HAVE A SLIM 102-98 MAJORITY -- IF THE CHRISTIANS ARE INCLUDED, AND THE THREE SMALL NON-SOCIALIST FRINGE PARTIES, RURAL, UNITY, AND CONSTITUTIONALIST, WITH THEIR COMBINED TOTAL OF 4 SEATS, ARE EXCLUDED.

5. COMMUNIST STALINIST-FACTION LEADER TAISTO SINISALO HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE DOES NOT CONSIDER HIMSELF BOUND BY ANY POSITION ON GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION OR RESULTS OF NEGOTIATIONS THAT THE COMMUNIST-FRONT PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATS (SKDL) OR THE COMMUNIST PARTY (SKP) DECIDES ON. BASED ON THIS AND OTHER FACTORS, THE CONFUSED PRESENT SITUATION SEEMS TO BOIL

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PAGE 03 HELSIN 02230 101511Z

DOWN TO THE FOLLOWING: A) THE CONSERVATIVES ARE WILLING TO GO INTO ALMOST ANY GOVERNMENT; B) THE CENTER PARTY IS KEEPING ITS OPTIONS OPEN BOTH TO THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT AND IS MOSTLY CONCERNED WITH GETTING THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP; C) THE SWEDES AND THE LIBERALS WILL GO ALONG WITH THE CENTER PARTY; D) THE CHRISTIANS WILL COME INTO GOVERNMENT ONLY IF NEEDED TO MAKE UP A NON-SOCIALIST MAJORITY; E) THE CONSTITUTIONALISTS, THE RURAL PARTY, AND PROBABLY THE UNITY PARTY WILL NOT BE

TAKEN INTO ANY GOVERNMENT; F) THE COMMUNISTS ARE SPLIT, AS ALWAYS, AND MAY BE UNABLE TO JOIN BECAUSE OF STALINIST OPPOSITION OR UNWILLING TO JOIN EITHER BECAUSE OF WHO ELSE WOULD PARTICIPATE -- SUCH AS THE CONSERVATIVES, OR BECAUSE THEY WILL FIND IT MUCH MORE PROFITABLE TO REMAIN OUTSIDE, WITH THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ATTACKING THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE BOURGEOISIE THAT THIS GIVES THEM (THEIR TERMS ARE SO TOUGH THAT IT RAISES THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THEY ARE REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT ACTUALLY PARTICIPATING IN THE GOVERNMENT OR JUST ENGAGING IN TACTICS; G) THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ARE IN A QUANDARY -- THEY WANT TO BE IN GOVERNMENT, WANT THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP, AND AT THIS POINT, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE NOVEMBER 2-4 METALWORKER UNION ELECTIONS DARE NOT TAKE PART IN A GOVERNMENT THAT DOES NOT ALSO INCLUDE THE COMMUNISTS. ALL OF WHICH MAKES THE EARLY FORMATION OF A NEW POLITICAL GOVERNMENT MOST UNLIKELY, NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT IS NEEDED FOR PUTTING THROUGH TOUGH LEGISLATION ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY.
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